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In articles on student unrest, there is a great tendency to oversimplify the issues and to assume that the components and stakes are the same from Minnesota to Czechosiovakia. To understand this complex phenomenon, the following questions should be answered: How many different problems, of what orders of magnitude and intensity, need to be recognized? What can faculties and administrations do to meet these problems without relinquishing educational freedom to bigotry? Can the university, after identifying the levels of problems, deal with them? Can it emerge with its structure and underlying values intact? If danger to these values exists, how can the individual professor help counteract it? To analyze the structural variety of student unrest, it is helpful to consider the membership and motives of students in terms of a series of concentric circles. From this perspective, the different sources of unrest can be dealt with differently. (The Vietnam war injects a special element of venom into student discontent.) Many students have turned to quieter and slower ways of effecting change and the worst of the destructive frenzy may be over. Out of the turmoil has come the ominous evidence of a possibly damaging anti-intellectualism and evidence of the lack of recognition by college faculties of their own pivotal role in dealing with student unrest and their view that the troubles are none of their business. Faculty reticence must be overcome and the university must be recognized as an overarching institution composed oa a maze of subcommunities in which there can be no special rules for anyone. (JS)

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To Live With Complexity

A problem for students - - and for the rest of us

by Franklin L. Ford

GIVEN THE PLETHORA of articles about student unrest that leap at us from the pages of daily papers, newsmagazines, Sunday supplements, and journals of opinion, it seems almost brash to venture another written word on the subject. One feature of many (I do not say all) such treatments, however, has come to worry me a good deal. It is the tendency to simplify what are in fact exceedingly complex and differentiated problems of present-day university life. Evidence of this rage to simplify shows up in the ease with which many writers who ought to know better lump all colleges and universities together as though they shared, with only slight variations, the same administrative structures, the same social compositions and—here's where the fun begins—the same faults and weaknesses. All human institutions have their flaws and vulnerabilities, but they are not all the same flaws or uniform vulnerabilities. It does not help anyone's understanding of a given case to assume that the stakes have been the same in French and in Czechoslovakian universities, or that after Berkeley and Columbia, it is clear just what Yale or Chicago or the University of Minnesota is in for. It might be convenient for the editorialists with only limited space if colleges and universities *were* that nearly uniform; but it would also be deadly dull, and in any case, it just isn't so.

A related and to my mind even more serious case of distortion through simplification afflicts those who are willing to see "student unrest" itself as a single, easily grasped phenomenon, about which we can argue as we might over a cohesive drama or a unified work of architecture. Glib generalizations breed their own species of confusion and misunderstanding. If one deplores, as I most emphatically do, the eagerness of some of our most vocal youth to see the world in terms of emotionally satisfying but intellectually worthless stereotypes—"*the* Establishment," "radical

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Participants in a mass meeting this fall near Memorial Hall. "Student unrest" is no single, easily grasped phenomenon, Dean Ford suggests. Rather, it might be considered "in terms of a series of concentric circles."

concern versus liberal moral neutrality," "government-university complicity" are only a few such – one must just as firmly deny himself the use of cant terms in talking or thinking about even the young people who rejoice in such language, not to mention the many more young people who do not.

What I propose to do in these few pages is to ask and attempt briefly to answer a series of questions which may at first seem only to complicate the issues but which can in the long run, I believe, help to increase the clarity, the sympathy, the good humor, the firmness, and the sense of shared responsibility, all of which are badly needed as we confront this part of the troubled American scene.

Here are the questions:

(1) If there is no single "student problem," how many different problems, of what orders of magnitude and intensity, need to be recognized within the general pattern of unrest on today's campuses?

(2) What can faculties and their administrations do to meet these problems, without selling out the ideal of educational freedom to the bigotry of zealots, whether from the Right or Left or Underground?

(3) Just how bad *are* things? Once we have sorted out levels and categories of problems, have we any grounds for optimism about the university's ability to deal with any or all of them?

(4) Apart from whatever success may be achieved in avoiding disruption, responding to sensible proposals for change, and maintaining the notion that education is worth more than any riot, how much danger is there that the university and college community will emerge from this time of troubles with its structure and its underlying values twisted or permanently damaged?

(5) And finally, if one finds that there is a danger of such damage, what can he – and here I speak especially to the individual professor – do to help counteract it?

The Circles of Unrest

As to the first point, the structural variety of student unrest, let me suggest a method of analysis that considers such unrest in terms of a series of concentric

Harvard blacks in a Vietnam protest march last year. "The war pumps in an element which is simply different in kind from anything else exciting student opposition to things as they are."

circles. It is a method that does not assume that all students are unhappy all the time. But it does permit us to perceive differing degrees of diffusion and also of intensity in such unhappiness as does exist. Furthermore, visualizing the circles as concentric helps to explain why students who fall within the inner ones share the discontents felt by all those in the outer, plus some additional aims and impulses *not* shared by everyone in the larger configurations.

The largest circle encompasses those, and they are many, who in one form or another are experiencing the pains of growing up, intellectually, socially, in many cases physically, while in college, a place of challenges, moments of both exhilaration and discouragement, and the competitive tension which no faculty could impose on the young with anything like the rigor youth itself brings to comparative judgments of individuals. At this level, student unrest is nothing new. Is there anyone capable of reading these words who has not felt it, shared in it some time or other? This does not mean that problems of maturing are a negligible factor, but it does mean that they are presumably part of life itself and that to disapprove of their manifold expressions has about as much meaning as would criticism of, say, the Pacific Ocean.

The second circle, which at times, I admit, seems to contain all students in the first, is nevertheless more limited by temporal circumstances. It finds its being in the particular malaise of the 1960's, not exactly a gay decade for anyone, young or old. The thought-benumbing blows of successive assassinations, the equally tragic though more comprehensible crisis of the cities, the growing bitterness of the poor amid the self-congratulations of affluence, the even greater bitterness of black Americans, rich or poor, for whom American society seems to combine legal equality with actual caste discrimination – all of these torments of our day have hit thoughtful young people with peculiar force. This is so not only because youth is a time of extreme vulnerability to grief and frustration, as well as a time of impatient, generous sympathy for the underdog, but also because young people know that they will have to live far longer than their elders with the results of the assassinations and with the demands of militant (most students appear to believe justly militant) underprivileged groups.

Vietnam Envenoms Criticism

The war in Vietnam deserves a word of separate comment. Though the second circle of unhappiness with the events and conditions of the 1960s would exist even if America were not mired in the jungles of Southeast Asia, I am personally convinced that the war pumps in an element which is simply different in kind from anything else exciting student opposition to things as they are. Without it, we should have criticism of older people and established institutions, criticism much of which would be sharp and some of which would doubtless be raucous; but with the war, we have all of that envenomed by a sense which can only be described as one of horror. It is the war, and I believe the war alone – fought by conscripts and for stated aims its methods seem to mock – which leads so many students to charge America as a whole with the cruelty which might otherwise be attributed to the individual murderers of great men and humble civil rights workers.

To dismiss the depth of student feeling on this issue as a kind of sublimation of unadmitted cowardice makes no sense whatever. If it is foolish to suggest that some genetic miracle has suddenly produced a generation of unprecedented wisdom and moral purity

Last year's "Dow sit-in," when students prevented an industry interviewer from leaving a laboratory. "The fourth circle, whose behavior is most consciously provocative."

—and that is obviously so foolish that many students who like to needle us with the possibility can scarcely do so without a sheepish grin—it is equally foolish to think that cowardice has broken out in the nation, or to say that "since we had to fight Hitler, why can't they see that they must save America from Ho Chi Minh?" Yet the question of courage would exist for present-day college students, even if their elders all had the good sense not to sneer. It is a question students put to themselves; and I think it not misleading to suggest that some aspects of campus demonstrations, the defiance of authority, the challenge to arrest and prosecution—in short some of the things which are hardest for older Americans to accept—are rooted at least partly in the pressing need many of the demonstrators feel to show themselves, and us, that they are not afraid of danger as such, that they *will* take risks for a cause they think is just. One can in particular cases dispute their judgment and even their definition of justice, but one cannot without imperiling comprehension deny the force of this need.

Dissenters and Militants

A third circle, considerably smaller than the second and very much smaller than the first, really comprises a variety of separate groups of dissenters whose interests occasionally overlap but whose differing complaints are not impossible to sort out. These include the militant black power advocates within universities (whom many other black students do not support but whom almost none of the latter would openly denounce); the more doctrinaire advocates of "student power," as a campaign not just to effect specific reforms but to alter the fundamental distribution of roles and responsibilities in the university; and the most resentful elements among graduate teaching fellows or teaching assistants, who not unnaturally press to have their status as teachers elevated and their status as students de-emphasized.

There are many other militant factions, but these three must suffice for purposes of illustration. Sometimes, as I say, they may attempt to cooperate, but cooperation is not easy. The graduate teaching fellow who seeks to be more honored and better paid as a teacher is scarcely the natural ally of the proponent of student power, and even the most embattled spokesmen of black students at present seem inclined to go it alone. (Last spring I heard one of the latter observe succinctly that "one thing we don't need is a bunch of guilt-ridden suburbanites around our necks.") In any case, it is worth emphasizing that the groups making up this third circle almost without exception stop short of attacking the university in all its aspects. They want to change it, obviously, but just as obviously, its survival as a center of power and influence is essential to their own strivings for advancement.

With the fourth, most restricted circle, we arrive at that segment of the student body whose behavior is most consciously provocative and who provide news-

paper and television cameramen and reporters with their most prized material. Even here, I would make one final distinction. This fourth circle, it seems to me, should be restricted to the avowed "wreckers," but it too must provide room for differing motives. In addition to politically doctrinaire revolutionaries, we also confront—and we ought to say so frankly—a scattering of students who seem to be motivated by little more than mischief, a quality some of our most solemn pundits seem to me quite consistently to underestimate. We also confront—and again, this needs to be said clearly, though not without sympathy—the desperate, resentful impulse of a sad handful of individuals who could not make the grade as students and believe they have no recourse but to prove that it is they who've been right all along, the victims of a worthless system.

The politically significant part of the "wreckers' circle" does, however, comprise the few proudly self-identified campus revolutionaries, who have persuaded themselves that American society and government are corrupt beyond saving, so that to destroy a university is simply to hack away a limb of a hopelessly diseased tree. I have been asked from time to time whether I believe any of these students are serious when they call themselves Maoists, as some do. The answer is, of course I believe they are serious. If you wanted to be anti-American, yet felt hostile to the Soviets because the U.S.S.R. is another big Establishment, as well as to Castro because he supposedly failed to stand by Che Guevara, how could you do better than to salute Chairman Mao, who is remote, the enemy of a long list of established powers, and in all other respects just about ideal? This is not to say that many such students know enough about conditions in Red China to have much claim to the name of "Maoist" in any real sense, but no matter.

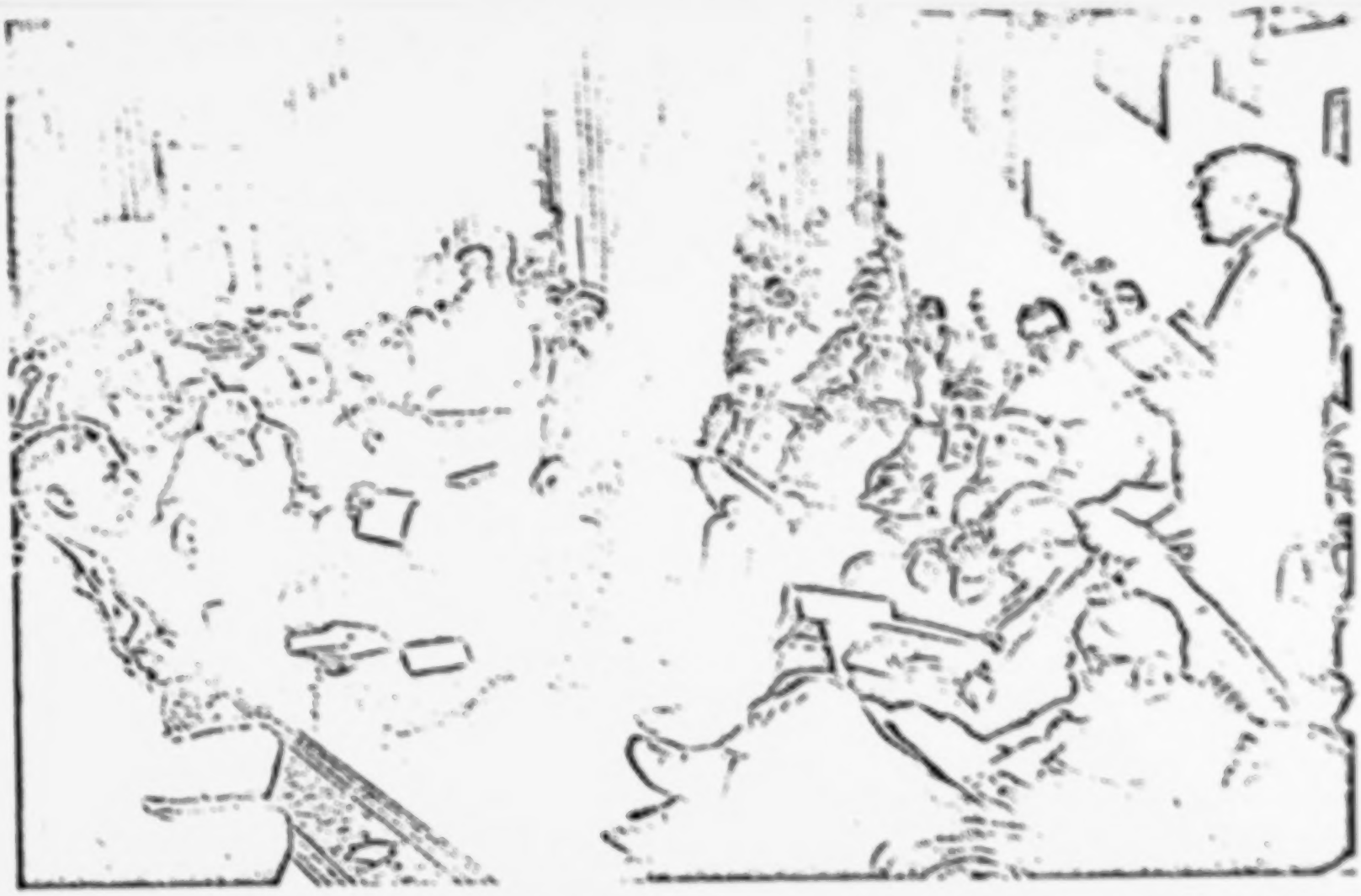
I have also been asked on occasion if any students "think it is enough just to wreck, not to rebuild." Of course some do, believing that to tear down a bad structure is enough for one generation—let others rebuild. (In taking this position, certain individuals may feel they are following in the tradition of Voltaire, whose "*écrasez l'infâme*" with respect to the eighteenth-century Catholic church admittedly carried with it no constructive suggestions, though I doubt that his latter-day disciples in this regard know, or for that matter care, what a moderate reformer he was in many other respects.)

My series of concentric rings, like any other schematic analysis, is open to any number of modifications and objections on the part of people who would order differently the several elements in the situation. Certainly I do not pretend to have included every such element, let alone every nuance. The important thing, however, seems to me to agree on some recognition that there *are* separate elements. If one does not do at least that much, then he falls into the danger of treating all student dissent, across the board, as though it expressed the aims and the ideology of extreme revolutionaries, who in fact remain a tiny minority. That would be unjust in concept and unhelpful in practice. The other danger of a monolithic approach might be the opposite suggestion, namely, that because a vast majority of dissenting students are not bent on creating general chaos, there are no elements of mischief or nihilism at all in the compound. That too would be both naive and inaccurate, at least in most of the cases about which I know anything.

This breakdown into circles of motives and membership I have developed at some length, for I know it may not be easily accepted by many readers inside or outside the academic community. If the need for some such basis is acknowledged, however, the answer to the other four questions with which I began come rather quickly and can be briefly stated.

What Can Be Done?

Thus, to the query "What can be done about student unrest?" let me reply that we must go on trying to deal with its several sources in several different ways, trying not to overreact but to meet each complaint or demand in terms which our constituents will recognize as neither repressive nor supine, but responsive. To the uneasy young adult of the first, largest circle we must go on offering, and seeking to improve, the advice and help of proctors, of masters and tutors in the residential Houses, of instructors and section men within specific courses, and of more technically trained staff members of the Bureau of Study



President Pusey listens at a meeting of the Student-Faculty Advisory Council of Harvard College, formed in the spring.

"We can and do offer the opportunity to discuss the issues in an almost limitless range of situations."

Counsel. When still more professional attention is required, the University Health Services will as in the past offer their medical, including psychiatric, expertise. The techniques of counseling at all levels are still far from perfect, but in my own 25 years as a college teacher I have seen them win more attention and acquire more sophistication with each passing year. Communication can always be improved, and we must keep working at it; but to say that in a present-day American college or university the student cannot talk to anyone is pure poppycock. It may be easier for him in some institutions and harder in others, but in none known to me is it impossible.

For the second circle, the students most worried by the issues of the day, we can and do offer the chance to discuss those issues in an almost limitless range of situations: in the classroom, in various sponsored group meetings, in wholly informal, and generally nocturnal, bull sessions. Beyond that, I think students have come to realize more and more, especially in just the last few months, that college faculties and administrations do not constitute uncritical pillars of unanimous support for public policies young people want to hear challenged and debated.

As for the third circle, that of specific "interest groups," we must seek to speak to each in its own terms. We shall continue to engage black students in the search for qualified candidates for admission back in their home communities and in the planning of courses, both formal and informal, having to do with the experience of Afro-Americans, including their ancestral roots in Africa itself; but we must reject the notion of guaranteed quotas of black students or staff, as we have resisted past demands for other, essentially negative, ethnic quotas. To the proponents of "student power," we shall continue to offer the chance to make their case for student representation on various faculty committees; but we need not surrender the very concept of differentiation of roles as among governing boards, faculty members, and students. As for disgruntled teaching fellows, we adjust pay scales (as Harvard has just done this fall)

Students bar the Dow man's way. "Egregious behavior, in the most literal sense, is that which violates the civil rights, including the free movement, of other individuals."

when we can be shown the clear need to do so and when we can afford it. For the rest, many departments have shown an increasing sensitivity to the problems of their graduate students who are spending two or three years as apprentice teachers while en route to the Ph.D. Such advanced graduate students can, and I think will, be drawn increasingly into discussions of serious pedagogical matters.

School Will Keep

For what I have portrayed as the narrowest circle, the mischief-makers and their solemn fellow-revolutionaries, we have tried to make clear that, like all other students, they have the right to be heard and that we will defend them as individuals against attacks aimed simply at their opinions. On the other hand, without wanting to predict just what action would be taken in any of a long series of hypothetical, and wholly unpredictable, situations, we need to identify at least two kinds of behavior that cannot be tolerated in an educational community. The first is obstruction of the teaching and learning process itself, whether in classrooms or libraries or laboratories. In short, school is going to keep. The second kind of behavior which must be recognized as egregious, in the most literal sense, is that which violates the civil rights, including the free movement, of other individuals. As I say, it seems unhelpful to elaborate rigid tariffs of crimes and punishments; but on the two central points just noted, it seems to me that the education of the university community should now be complete, and that from here on, no one should expect to violate either of these self-evident rules and still retain his membership in that community.

My third proposed question had to do with the present state of things, seen against a background of visible discontents and corresponding efforts to deal with them as sympathetically as possible and as firmly as necessary. If we can learn any one thing from history, it is that, whether or not one accepts the Greeks' explanation of wrath on Olympus, the uncritically optimistic assertion that things are getting better is all too often the signal for them to get much worse. Nevertheless, there has been so much gloom [illegible] activists in general or distrust everyone who has anything to do with running a college or university, that I feel impelled to report that this year the feeling of rancor and of incipient explosion within Harvard University seems somewhat reduced from the worst levels of 1967–68. (Last year may in fact prove to have been the worst, but very much the worst, of several bad ones for American higher education.) Demands for change and for reform will continue; they may get much louder; but they are not the same as destructive frenzy.

I am not being wholly impressionistic in this, although there is no denying that a university, like any other social organism, has a somewhat different "feel" about it at various times and that numerous people concerned can agree on the general import of that "feel," without being able to explain it precisely. In any event, I can cite three examples to show that if this latest age of student revolution has not wholly

yielded to one of student progressivism and reform, there are some restraints discernible in the attitudes of large numbers of students. First, the cycle of violent and genuinely destructive university uprisings, notably those at Columbia, Paris, Berlin, and Mexico City, seems to have left many young people frankly tired of that way of seeking change. I refuse to generalize confidently about this, and I know that some observers think we are still sliding downhill toward genuine chaos; but what I have been observing in our own institution has been supported by reports from several others, to the effect that most students do want to finish their educations and have now had ample opportunity to see the threat to that aim implicit in mindless violence, regardless of who unleashes it or for what motive.

Second, whatever place Senator Eugene McCarthy ultimately comes to hold in political history, it seems to me that his place in the history of higher education in America is already secure. Admirably, after the rush back into political participation on the part of college students, triggered by his presidential candidacy and quite predictably interrupted at the Democratic National Convention, many students have lapsed into cynicism once more or have announced themselves as simply "turned off" – for this year anyway. But what impresses me is the very large number who have not reacted that way. One of the new student organizations at Harvard is called the Committees of Responsible Students, and it is made up of many people who are determined to go on working within the system, this year supporting specific candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives whose views they endorse. Thereafter, quite obviously, these students hope to win through the slow, patient processes of the electoral system at its roots what they found they could not achieve by stepping in last winter at its top.

Finally on this count, let me simply point out what I imagine all of us have known at one time or another but may on occasion have forgotten, namely, that most students, most of the time, are skeptical of apodictic statements and apocalyptic visions. They do not believe everything they hear from their parents or from politicians, from professors or from deans, but neither do they believe everything they hear from each other. At their best, they strike me as better able to cut through pompous jargon and unproven claims than are certain of their elders who hover over them in a mixture of apprehension and solicitude.

Franklin L. Ford
"Vehemence is no substitute for equity."

Are Universities in Danger?

Let me conclude by pulling together the last two questions I asked at the outset. Are there any dangers of long-term damage to the quality of the universities in this country, growing out of recent events and the present atmosphere? And if there are, what can we do right now to reduce that danger? So far as grounds for fear are concerned, I am not sure that there are [illegible] chance that out of the turmoil will come some long-term gains. However, I should mention just two possible residues that are worrisome.

One would be the blurring, all across the country, of the recognition by college and university *faculties* of their own absolutely pivotal role in dealing with student unrest. I know of no case of a major blow-up in a university where a fraction of the faculty had not contributed to the trouble by fudging the issues, whether moral, legal or simply rational. Perhaps still more ominous, however, has been the evidence that in some of these cases a somewhat larger part of the faculty involved viewed the crisis as none of its business. Where the line separating "administration" from "the faculty" is very sharp, this danger is par-

ticularly acute; where it is less sharp, it seems to me that there has been less trouble. But everywhere, there lingers the possibility that faculty members, who in the last analysis must give corporate sense and continuity to a college, will fall back instead on their right to teach what they please, do their research, and leave the affairs of the institution to those of their younger colleagues who "seem to get along better with the students."

The other possibly damaging hangover would be what I can only identify as a hidden anti-intellectualism, a concern with strong, upwardly visceral moral impulses, which may be admirable in themselves but do not alone qualify anyone to call himself an educated man. It is perfectly obvious that the "intellectual" approach to any topic is not the only possible one, that faith, aesthetic awe, even mysticism and intuition may add to the findings of a disciplined mind. But the intellectual approach is the business of colleges and universities, and neither students nor faculty members should feel themselves that they can express contempt for it without repudiating the very interests that presumably brought them together. Words like "concern," "sincerity," "commitment," "[illegible]" sound and connotation, but if they were to be put up in opposition to "clarity," "comprehensiveness," and "accuracy of information," then I would wonder what really was left to be discussed in an academic community.

The Curious Reticence

What can we do about our present tensions and our possible dangers? Here, since no one can justly commit his colleagues to what they must do, I can only say what I intend to do. On the one hand, I shall go on encouraging the acceptance of faculty responsibility for the hardest, because most central, decisions we have to take, including when necessary the distasteful business of discipline. Far more important, however, I propose to try to overcome in myself, as I hope many other faculty members will in themselves, the curious reticence which the liberal academic has long shown with respect to the positive values he knows very well are central to his as to many other professions and, indeed, to the survival of any academic community at all. Because academic freedom has ended to be defined primarily in negative terms, as demands and assurances that certain kinds of self-expression will not be interfered with, it is now potentially vulnerable to challenges by one (blessedly few) individuals in the university community who will use it in their own defense but seem it as a right of everyone else in that community. Even if that were not so, the fact that we have been so much on the defensive in meeting loud, specific demands for action, without regard to that action's implications for freedom, indicates some things have not been getting said as clearly as they should have.

I believe explicitly, and shall say so whenever I am asked, that the university is not only an overarching institution at one extreme and a collection of thousands of individual human beings at the other but also, and very importantly, a maze of subcommunities—departments, musical and dramatic societies, social and social service clubs, athletic teams, houses and dormitories, faculty committees, student committees, mixed committees—in short that it can not and must not be turned into a mish-mash, a three-[illegible] continuously engaged in plebiscites on poorly understood questions.

Even in this age of concern and advocacy, I believe, and shall go on saying, that the search for objectivity is an essential part of the search for knowledge; and that while no man can be wholly unbiased, the effort to recognize and then to reduce bias is one of the noblest exercises of the human mind. Noble enough, I might add, so that the soundest and most generous approach even to a "gut issue" cannot be divorced from that effort.

Lastly, I believe firmly and explicitly that there can be no special rules for anyone, whatever his claim to moral superiority and "commitment," at the expense of anyone else. Vehemence is no substitute for equity; and if we yield to demands for special rules, he who now demands them might well one day turn out to be their victim. That's how cards can come up, even—or perhaps especially—from a stacked deck.